

Tape #49

MRS. ARTIE KIMBALL

Interviewed by Mike Brown.

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(Looking through pictures in a book)

Mike Brown (MB): Did you get to go in the shop much when you were a little girl before they turned it into the dance hall?

Artie Kimball (Artie): No, I was too small, I guess, for that.

MB: What was that dance hall like?

Artie: It was just one great big huge building. If I had my dad here, he would know.

MB: Have you seen much of that pottery left around the Basin?

Artie: No, there isn't. I doubt if you could find hardly any of it. Here they made jars.

MB: Now, this is what's important right here. It says that in '96 they changed it into a dance hall.

Artie: Well, you see, that would be before I was even born because I was born in '99.

MB: That would mean they only had a pottery shop there for like two years.

Artie: Sounds like that, then they turned it into a dance hall.

MB: I was under the impression that it had been there for a long time, but I guess it wasn't.

Artie: No, I don't think it was there too awful long.

MB: That's fascinating. One of the reasons that I read that they had to change it was because that the men working in there were getting sick from the fumes. Did your dad ever talk about that?

Artie: Yes, I remember him saying something about it.

MB: Was the Roberts Hall a successful enterprise?

Artie: Yes.

MB: I mean, did they make money at it?

Artie: Well, I don't suppose they made a great lot because they only charged them maybe a

dollar, a couple or something. Then they had to pay for the music.

MB: Can you tell me, did all the family own it or ...

Artie: Well, it was on my grandfather's ground right there. I imagine that he owned it, but my dad run the dances.

MB: That's what I was wondering. Did it support all those children or just a couple of them? You know, they got their livelihood from running the hall?

Artie: No, they didn't make enough to live on.

MB: Would it be OK if I copied that down there?

Artie: Sure.

MB: That is really good.

Artie: I just figured that you could get more out of this than you could...

MB: See, this is something that we haven't found anywhere. All the material that we've got leads people to believe that they had a pottery shop there for twenty to thirty years, you know, rather than just two years.

Artie: You see now, that pottery shop, what year was it?

MB: It says they opened in 1894.

Artie: Then when did they build the dance hall?

MB: 1896. So it was only there for two years.

Artie: See, they built the dance hall before I was born, because I was born in 1899.

MB: So when you were a little girl, they weren't doing any pottery at all, period.

Artie: No.

MB: Part of the reason why this fascinates me so much is my sister-in-law is a potter in Naples.

Artie: Who is she?

MB: Her name is Pat Brown, and my brother and I built her a pottery shop and a kiln and all that. It's called Valhalla Pottery.

Artie: You just go ahead and copy anything you want to.

MB: Do you remember some of the bands that they used to have there at that Roberts Hall?

Artie: Well, they didn't exactly have a band. They had George Allred on the violin and a Tilsinger who was on guitar and Rhoda Roberts was on the piano and that's all I remember.

MB: Do you ever remember them having picture shows there?

Artie: No, I don't remember them ever having a picture show there.

MB: Have you lived here all your life?

Artie: I was born and raised here and then I got married. We moved to Roosevelt. Then I moved to Salt Lake when my husband died twenty years ago.

MB: You came back to Vernal here?

Artie: I had him buried out here, so then I came back.

MB: You must have gone to school right there.

Artie: In that old maple school that's been tore down.

MB: That's something we sure hated to see go.

Artie: And I did too. They could have built some bathrooms and remodeled that and put that into a pretty good nursing home if they had a done it.

MB: Yes, you know the thing that upset me was that everyone tried to say it was a hazard and all that, but that building was as sound as a dollar, there was nothing wrong with that building.

Artie: Especially the one on this side. The one on the other side was quite old, but the other one wasn't too awful many hundred years old.

MB: But you know, even though I live out in Naples, what upset me worse than Naples was the Maeser School, because at least out in Naples, you know, they had built the business there. That caused a conflict of interest because my wife works there. They employ about seventy people, that's a lot of families and it's a lot of money.

Artie: There in the Naples School?

MB: No, where they built that oil field building?

Artie: Yes.

MB: Well, they tore the school down. Well, at least they built something there. Out in Maeser, they tore it down just to build a parking lot which is not useful at all.

Artie: That's what I can't understand about this First Ward Chapel up here. That's a beautiful chapel and why couldn't they remodel that and have that for a nursing home for their old people?

MB: Well, you know, right now, we have a Uintah County Historical Society that I helped organize. Iva is a member of it, she helped us get it started too. Part of the thing that is our big project right now is we are trying to raise money to save the tabernacle.

Artie: That's good.

MB: What we're trying to do is beat them to the draw. You know, they tore down the schools, they are tearing down the First Ward Chapel, and what we want to do is stop it before they decide they want to tear down the tabernacle.

Artie: They ought to put a fence around it and..

MB: Well, what I would like to see is, it needs a little work. Like, it needs a new roof and a heating plant and some things like that. It's going to cost a lot of money, it'll probably cost \$100,000. And that's a lot of money to raise.

Artie: Yes, but they raise it for everything else.

MB: Part of the thing is that we have to get people interested, people behind us to support that.

Artie: I'll tell you somewhere else you could go and maybe get a little more information.

MB: Where would that be?

Artie: Do you know Melba Roberts?

MB: No I don't, I just saw the article in the paper. Someone told me that she's from a different Roberts, though.

Artie: She is not. She married my dad's youngest brother, and he died a good many years ago.

MB: Now, she's ninety-four?

Artie: Yes, she's ninety years old.

MB: Someone told me that Arlene Chivers, might know.

Artie: They might know something about it, but I believe Aunt Melby could tell you something

about it, too. Do you know where Zella Shiner did live?

MB: No I didn't know her house.

Artie: From the center, you go straight up that street and there is the Harrison Apartments right there and then the Shiners are right next door.

MB: All right. I know Oral a little bit.

Artie: Then you go around the corner, go to Bigelows' and around the corner, and it's the second house. Bigelows' and then Aunt Melby's is the next.

MB: When did you get married and move to Roosevelt?

Artie: 1922 I think.

MB: You lived here during WWI then? Do you remember that?

Artie: Yes, because my husband was in it. He wasn't my husband then, he was in the First World War.

MB: Did he get drafted?

Artie: He enlisted.

Brown: Do you remember the flu epidemic at the end of the war?

Artie: First World War? Yes, because my oldest sister lost her one little boy with the flu in the First World War.

MB: Can you tell me about that? What was that like here?

Artie: Oh, gee, I don't know.

MB: It would have been 1918, 1919.

Artie: Yes, I know it was a bad flu. She lost her boy.

MB: Did you ever get sick from it?

Artie: No.

MB: Reading in the old papers about that time, I noticed that they said there was a lot of mass war bond rallies in the tabernacle during that time. Did you ever attend any of those?

Artie: I don't think so. I don't remember.

MB: According to the paper, they said they could jam 2000 people in there for that.

Artie: My mother and dad was real good dancers and they took the prize for different waltzes, and it tells about them being crowned king and queen somewhere in there.

MB: The name of this book here is the *Roberts History*?

Artie: No, the *Genealogy of the Roberts Family*.

MB: Are there many copies of this in town?

Artie: I don't think so. Mrs. Shiner got one and I got one. They charge you \$20 for them which wasn't bad.

MB: No, boy, it's not considering today. What I'd really like to see eventually, although I don't know if it will ever happen, I'd like to see copies of these various history books of the families down at the library, because there's so much information. Like see, I've been gathering material on bricks and on the Roberts Pottery Shop, but none of it has what you have here. You know, what I'm saying is that there's so many different sources where you can gather information and it's hard to get all of it. Have you ever seen a photograph of the building when it was the pottery shop or the dance hall?

Artie: No, I don't know if they ever took a picture when it was the hall.

MB: In reading the DUP book, I don't think I remember seeing one in there.

Artie: Would you like for me to call Aunt Melby and ask her if she could give you a little information on it?

MB: Would you mind?